

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
AND CONSERVATION

Central Land Office - Helena Unit



STEVE BULLOCK, GOVERNOR

STATE OF MONTANA

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HELENA, MT 59602

October 5, 2016

To: Beth Ihle, Deputy Ranger-Belt Creek-White Sulphur Springs Ranger District &  
Carol Hatfield, District Ranger- White Sulphur Springs District  
From: Andy Burgoyne, Helena Unit Manager, DNRC  
Subject: Moose Creek Vegetation Project Scoping Comments

Dear Ms. Ihle and Ms. Hatfield,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Moose Creek Vegetation Management Project. The DNRC appreciates the work the District is doing to address insect and disease concerns and to improve forest resiliency in the project area.

We support the District's focus on increasing stand resiliency by addressing recent Mountain pine beetle outbreak, western spruce budworm defoliation and dense stand conditions resulting from past harvest. We also support the proposed actions that will result in improving age class and structural diversity, reducing fuels and fire risk in the WUI and promoting whitebark pine stands. Although the DNRC does not have direct fire protection in the immediate project area, we do provide fire assistance to Meagher County on lands adjacent to the project area through the State of Montana County Cooperative Program. This assistance may include: training, equipment, operational fire support, and suppression cost relief. Work to reduce fuels and increase forest resiliency to insects and diseases will help to create a safer working environment by reducing exposure to risk and position fire fighters to protect the values at risk successfully during fire suppression efforts. **Therefore, it is important that project efforts result in more acreage treated on federal land adjacent to private land, especially private lands that have already been treated by the landowner. This is being a good neighbor while increasing hazardous fuel reduction efforts around values at risk protected by Meagher County directly and the DNRC indirectly through the State of Montana County Cooperative Program.**

This project is important in achieving Governor Bullock's Forest in Focus objectives. The project boundary is within the Priority Landscapes designated under the 2014 Farm Bill. Specifically, the project achieves the Governor's objectives by: 1) restoring forests and watersheds, while reducing fire risk and improving wildlife habitat; 2) developing the project collaboratively at the local level and 3) providing sustainable timber to local mills and contractors. **In regards to objective #3-utilization described in measurable terms would be helpful. For example, sawlog volume, pulp volume, post/pole volume, firewood, etc.**

We applaud the White Sulphur Springs Ranger District for developing a robust collaborative process to aid with project planning and development. We appreciate the District incorporating collaborative members' concerns into the development of treatment types and working to address the additional concerns the group identified specific to employment, wood products and fire risk. The DNRC shares

these same concerns and encourages the District to develop a final decision that addresses these issues through sustainable forestry practices.

The DNRC is contributing towards the success of this project by providing some funding towards, "design for culvert upgrade/repair and associated site restoration to be completed in the summer/fall 2016." We have appreciated the good communication with the District staff as state Forests in Focus dollars are utilized to benefit project outcomes in your District. We ask that you continue this meaningful communication with us as this project moves forward so the state can remain actively engaged in project progress.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on the Moose Creek Vegetation Project.

Sincerely,



Andy Burgoyne  
Unit Manager  
Helena Unit Field Office  
8001 N. Montana Ave  
Helena, MT-59602  
406-458-3517

**From:** Burgoyne, James  
**To:** [FS-comments-northern-lewisclark-white-sulphur-sprg](#)  
**Cc:** [Hatfield, Carol -FS](#); [Bookwalter, Maureen](#); [Bookwalter, Maureen A -FS](#)  
**Subject:** "Moose Creek Vegetation"  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 11, 2016 3:51:35 PM  
**Attachments:** [Moose Creek Comments Helena Unit, DNRC.pdf](#)

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Hello,

Please see the attached letter providing comments on the Moose Creek Vegetation project.

Thank you.

Andy Burgoyne  
Helena Unit Manager  
(406) 458-3517